

Message Text

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ACTION AF-04

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INR-05 INRE-00 CIAE-00 L-01 PM-03 HA-02 DODE-00
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FM AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2206

INFO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY DAKAR

AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMEMBASSY LAGOS

AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE

AMEMBASSY LOME

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

AMEMBASSY MAPUTO

AMEMBASSY RABAT

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

AMCONSUL LUBUMBASHI

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 KINSHASA 10457

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PEPR, EAID, CG

SUBJECT: CONSULTATIONS WITH GOZ ON REFORM

1. SUMMARY. IN SEPARATE MEETINGS SEPTEMBER 28-29 FOREIGN MINISTER
UMBA AND PRESIDENCY DIRECTOR NIMY EXPRESSED CONCERN TO ME
RE APPARENT US RELUCTANCE TO MOVE AHEAD WITH BRUSSELS CONFERENCE
NEXT MONTH AND PRESSED TO KNOW WHAT MORE THE US EXPECTED OF GOZ
IN AREA OF REFORM IMPLEMENTATION. I AGREED THAT PROGRESS
HAD BEEN EXCELLENT IN NORMALIZING RELATIONS WITH ANGOLA AND REA-
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SONABLY GOOD WITH RESPECT TO SPECIFIC STEPS TO IMPROVE FINANCIAL
MANAGEMENT. HOWEVER, WE WERE CONCERNED BY DELAYS IN DEVELOPING A
NEW STABILIZATION PROGRAM AND BY THE SLOW PACE OF REFORMS IN OTHER
AREAS SUCH AS INTEGRATING SHABA INTO THE BODY POLITIC,
REORGANIZING THE MILITARY AND ATTACKING CORRUPTION.
BOTH UMBA AND NIMY REACTED DEFENSIVELY,
COUNTERING THAT THE GOZ HAD MADE IMPORTANT PROGRESS AND SUGGESTING

THAT, IN CONTRAST TO ZAIRE'S OTHER FRIENDS, THE US SEEMED TO EXPECT TOO MUCH TOO SOON. END SUMMARY.

2. UMBA OPENED LONG MEETING SEPTEMBER 28 BY PROFESSING TO BE A LITTLE CONFUSED: HE SAID MOST IF NOT ALL DONORS SEEMED TO FAVOR HOLDING BRUSSELS CONFERENCE OCTOBER 12-13, BUT THAT BELGIANS WERE SAYING THE AMERICANS WERE HOLDING EVERYTHING UP. I REPLIED THAT WAS NOT AN ACCURATE REFLECTION OF MY UNDERSTANDING OF THE STATE OF PLAY. THE DONORS WERE IN THE PROCESS OF CONSULTING ON VARIOUS ASPECTS OF THE BRUSSELS MEETING WITH A VIEW TO DECIDING WHAT SHOULD AND COULD BE ACCOMPLISHED. SOME (LIKE THE BELGIANS) BUT NOT ALL HAD ALREADY DECLARED THEMSELVES AS FAVORING GOING AHEAD. THE US WAS STILL EXAMINING THE MATTER, AND IT SHOULD NOT BE ASSUMED WE WERE TRYING TO BLOCK THE MEETING. A MAJOR CONSIDERATION FOR US WAS THE PRINCIPLE WHICH HAD BEEN ADOPTED AT THE JUNE MEETING TO AWAIT CONCLUSION OF A NEW STABILIZATION PROGRAM BEFORE SITTING DOWN AGAIN TO DISCUSS AID CONTRIBUTIONS. ALSO, WE WERE INTERESTED IN IMPLEMENTATION PROGRESS ON THE WHOLE RANGE OF REFORMS AND NOT JUST SPECIFIC STEPS IN THE FINANCIAL AND ECONOMIC AREAS.

3. WITH RESPECT TO REFORMS, UMBA ASKED HOW WE ASSESSED PROGRESS TO DATE. BEFORE I COULD REPLY, HE TICKED OFF WHAT HE VIEWED AS THE GOZ'S CONSIDERABLE ACCOMPLISHMENTS DURING THE PAST THREE MONTHS: RECO
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CILATION WITH ANGOLA, AMNESTY, IMPROVED SECURITY IN SHABA, MOVING BLUMENTHAL INTO THE CENTRAL BANK, OTHER FOREIGN EXPERTS SOON TO COME INTO THE FINANCE MINISTRY, CUSTOMS, ETC. WHAT MORE, HE ASKED, DO THE AMERICANS WANT?

4. I ACKNOWLEDGED THAT PROGRESS HAD INDEED BEEN MADE IN THE AREAS HE HAD CITED. CERTAINLY RAPPROCHEMENT WITH ANGOLA HAD PROCEEDED EXTREMELY WELL. AND WE WERE ENCOURAGED BY STEPS BEING TAKEN TO BRING ORDER TO THE GOZ'S FINANCES. AS UMBA KNEW, WE REGARDED THE STABILIZATION PROGRAM AS A KEY ELEMENT AND HAD HOPED MORE PROGRESS WOULD HAVE BEEN MADE BY NOW; WE RECOGNIZED, HOWEVER, THAT DELAYS IN FORMULATING THE PROGRAM COULD PROBABLY BE ATTRIBUTED TO THE IMF AS WELL AS THE GOZ.

5. I SAID IMPLEMENTATION OF REFORMS IN THE POLITICAL AND MILITARY SECTORS SEEMED TO BE SOMEWHAT LESS SATISFACTORY. SPECIFICALLY, WE HAD NOT NOTED MUCH PROGRESS YET WITH RESPECT TO POLITICAL RECONCILIATION BETWEEN THE SHABA REGION AND THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT. IT SEEMED THAT IMPROVED SECURITY IN SHABA RESULTING FROM NORMALIZATION WITH ANGOLA AND THE EFFECTIVE OPERATION OF THE INTER-AFRICAN FORCE OPENED THE WAY FOR THE GOZ TO TAKE STEPS DESIGNED TO IMPROVE POPULAR

ATTITUDES TOWARD AND SUPPORT OF THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT. I FEARED THAT IF SUCH STEPS WERE NOT TAKEN, THE SITUATION COULD EVENTUALLY DETERIORATE AGAIN AND GIVE RISE TO NEW SECURITY PROBLEMS AMONG A POPULATION THAT SEEMED TO STILL FEEL NEGLECTED BY AND ESTRANGED FROM KINSHASA.

6. UMBA PRESSED FOR SPECIFICS. I FIRST SAID WE WERE AWARE OF THE DIFFICULTIES AND SENSIVITIES OF THIS LONG-STANDING PROBLEM, AND IN NO WAY PRESUMED TO HAVE ALL THE ANSWERS. MOREOVER, WE HAD NO INTENTION OF TRANSGRESSING ZAIRE'S SOVEREIGNTY, WHICH WE CONTINUED TO RESPECT. WE DID, HOWEVER, HAVE SOME IDEAS. FOR EXAMPLE, WAS THERE NOT A NEED FOR GREATER DIALOGUE BETWEEN SHABANS AND THEIR GOVERNMENT? COULD THIS BE ACHIEVED BY THE PRESIDENT'S MEETING WITH SELECTED SHABAN LEADERS, PERHAPS INCLUDING THE REGION'S REPRESENTATIVES IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL? WOULD IT NOT HELP TO HAVE MORE SHABANS IN POSITIONS OF AUTHORITY IN THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT? HAD THE TIME COME WHEN SHABA COULD REVERT FROM MILITARY TO CIVILIAN CONTROL?

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7. MOVING ON TO THE MILITARY, I SAID I WAS NOT AWARE THAT ANY STEPS HAD YET BEEN TAKEN TO CUT DOWN THE SIZE OF THE ARMY, TO CREATE THE LEAN, BETTER DISCIPLINED FORCE WHICH WAS SO IMPORTANT FOR ZAIRE'S FUTURE SECURITY. OUR MILITARY ASSISTANCE WAS DESIGNED TO SUPPORT THE GOZ'S PLANS FOR SWEEPING REORGANIZATION; HOWEVER, IT WAS DIFFICULT FOR US TO IDENTIFY AREAS WHERE THE PLAN HAD IN FACT BEEN IMPLEMENTED.

8. AS FOR OTHER AREAS OF REFORM, I SAID CORRUPTION REMAINED A CONCERN AND SOME DRAMATIC GESTURES TO DEMONSTRATE THE GOZ'S OWN CONFIDENTIAL

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CERN AND TO SERVE AS A REAL DETERRENT STILL SEEMED IN ORDER. I MENTIONED AS AN EXAMPLE THE LARGE SUMS OF COFFEE EXPORT RECEIPTS THAT HAD ALLEGEDLY NOT BEEN REPATRIATED, NOTING THAT RECENTLY WHILE ON HOME LEAVE I HAD SEEN AT LEAST TWO CRITICAL PRESS STORIES MENTIONING THIS PROBLEM.

9. FINALLY, I SAID THAT WHILE THE PRESIDENT'S AMNESTY DECISIONS WERE ENCOURAGING, AND THE RELEASE OF NGUZA HAD BEEN PARTICULARLY WELL RECEIVED IN THE US, THE GOZ MIGHT CONSIDER EXTENDING THE AMNESTY TO ENCOMPASS OTHERS INCLUDING MILITARY PRISONERS. I THEN WENT ON TO RAISE THE MATTER OF DETAINEES AT THE LOKANDU CAMP, THE ICRC'S CONTINUING EFFORTS TO SEE POW'S REPORTEDLY HELD AT KOLWEZI AND KINSHASA, AND OUR STRONG INTEREST IN THE UNHCR'S EFFORTS TO HELP REPATRIATE ZAIRIAN REFUGEES IN ANGOLA (SEPTELS).

10. THROUGHOUT OUR DISCUSSION UMBA ADOPTED A DEFENSIVE POSTURE, ATTEMPTING TO EXPLAIN OR REBUT THE POINTS I WAS MAKING. ON SHABA, HE CONTENTED (AS WE HAVE HEARD BEFORE) THAT THERE REALLY WAS NO POLITICAL PROBLEM, ALL THAT THE PEOPLE NEEDED WAS ADEQUATE FOOD, SHELTER, JOBS AND OTHER ECONOMIC BENEFITS WHICH THE GOZ WAS TRYING TO FULFILL. THE IDEA OF SIGNLING OUT SHABA FOR A SPECIAL DIALOGUE WOULD ONLY LEAD TO FURTHER POLITICAL PROBLEMS THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY. THE ONLY THING THAT WOULD SATISFY THE SHABAN "EXTREMISTS" WAS REGIONAL INDEPENDENCE, WHICH WAS UNTHINKABLE. UMBA DID HINT, HOWEVER, THAT THERE MAY BE PLANS AFOOT TO BRING MORE SHABANS INTO THE GOVERNMENT. HE ALSO ACKNOWLEDGED THAT MILITARY RULE IN SHABA SHOULD END, BUT PROBABLY NOT BEFORE THE END OF THE YEAR.

11. ON THE MILITARY, UMBA EXPLAINED THAT REORGANIZATION INVOLVED COMPLICATED, SENSITIVE ISSUES. ANY DRASTIC, SUDDEN CUTS WOULD ADD TO THE ALREADY DIFFICULT UNEMPLOYMENT PROBLEM. REORGANIZATION, TO BE MEANINGFUL AND EFFECTIVE, WOULD REQUIRE CARE AND TIME. ON
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CORRUPTION, UMBA ACKNOWLEDGED IT WAS A CONTINUING CONCERN BUT CLAIMED SOME IMPROVEMENTS HAD ALREADY BEEN MADE, INCLUDING CLAMPING DOWN ON COFFEE EXPORT ABUSES. ON DETAINEES AND HUMAN RIGHTS IN GENERAL, HE TOOK THE OFT-HEARD LINE THAT ZAIRE WAS THE VICTIM OF SENSATION-PRONE FOREIGN MEDIA AND THERE WAS INADEQUATE UNDERSTANDING OF THE TREMENDOUS DIFFICULTIES WITH WHICH THE GOVERNMENT HAD TO COPE.

12. ON SEPTEMBER 29 I MET WITH PRESIDENCY DIRECTOR NIMY AT HIS REQUEST. OUR CONVERSATION WAS ALONG LINES VERY SIMILAR TO THAT WITH UMBA, WITH NIMY PRESSING TO KNOW WHAT AREAS OF REFORM WE BELIEVE ARE LAGGING. I COVERED MOST OF THE SAME POINTS, ALTHOUGH IN LESS DETAIL, AND NIMY LISTEND MORE THAN HE REBUTTED. LIKE UMBA, HOWEVER, NIMY DID PROTEST THERE WAS NO MAJOR POLITICAL PROBLEM UNIQUE TO SHABA.

13. COMMENT: IT WAS EVIDENT THAT BOTH UMBA (WHO TOOK NOTES) AND NIMY HAD BEEN CHARGED BY MOBUTU (WHO HAS JUST RETURNED FROM GBADOLITE) TO FIND OUT WHAT'S EATING THE AMERICANS. IF THEIR DEFENSIVE REACTION TO ALMOST ALL THE POINTS I MADE IS DIRECTLY REFLECTIVE OF MOBUTU'S CURRENT THINKING -- WHICH IS MOST LIKELY -- IT APPEARS THAT MOBUTU INTENDS TO HOLD TO THE LINE THAT HIS RECORD TO DATE ON REFORMS IS GENERALLY GOOD AND THAT THE US, LIKE ZAIRE'S OTHER FRIENDS (E.G. , BELGIANS, FRENCH), SHOULD BE MORE REALISTIC IN ITS ASSESSMENT OF ZAIRE'S SITUATION, LESS DEMANDING IN THE DIFFICULT AREAS
OF POLITICAL REFORMS REQUIRING LONGER-TERM SOLUTIONS, AND MORE GENEROUS
IN HELPING ZAIRE TO RECOVER (I.E., BRUSSELS CONFERENCE). IT MUST BE EVIDENT TO MOBUTU FROM RECENT DEVELOPMENTS THAT HIS EFFORTS TO DIVIDE AND CONQUER ZAIRE'S DONOR-FRIENDS ARE BEGINNING TO BEAR FRUIT AND THAT THE US IN PARTICULAR IS FINDING ITSELF INCREASINGLY ISOLATED IN PRESSING FOR URGENT IMPLEMENTATION OF WIDE-RANGING REFORMS. DESPITE THE MORE ADVANTAGEOUS TACTICAL POSITION HE HAS ACHIEVED AND THE LIKELIHOOD HE WILL TAKE A TOUGH LINE HIMSELF WITH US, MOBUTU WILL CERTAINLY HAVE TAKEN NOTE OF THE AREAS FOR ACTION THAT I TRIED TO IDENTIFY WITH UMBA AND NIMY. I BELIEVE HE MAY YET TAKE ADDITIONAL
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CORRECTIVE STEPS, BUT AT A TIME AND IN A WAY THAT AVOIDS THE APPEARANCE OF HAVING BUCKLED UNDER OUR CONTINUING PRESSURE.

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